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October 19, 1983

Robert -

How frustrated I am because I can not reach you at 1 - 717 - 282 2484 and because I do not want to telephone the "Mrs. Colville" number for fear that I will get the Jean and Ken residence and have to ask them about your number.

I had a lovely afternoon (3 PM - 5 PM) with the Holsteins last Friday, October 14. They met me at the Library at Widener and we spent two hours in the Media Center in the basement of the Library and there I photographed their collection of stereographs. I have two negatives of each of the Carbondale stereographs, plus good details of each of them.

Several other things came up :

1. Matching grant. Enclosed is a brochure from Atlantic Richfield which the Holsteins have partially filled out. If the CHS & Museum has a tax-exempt status (see bottom of column following PART B), then fill out the Part B and enclose the copy of the tax-exempt letter and then send it, and notify the Holsteins that you have done so. Just a note to them telling them whether the CHS & Museum does or does not have the status so that they know whether Atlantic Richfield will or will not match the grant. They want to know, just for their records.

2. Mr. Holstein, who subscribes to American History Illustrated thought that the "Currents" page from the two issues which I have xeroxed would apply to the CHS & Museum. Apparently by following the procedures on the two pages one might get considerable federal monies.

3. If the CHS & Museum has a spare sheet or two of its stationery then send a sheet or two of it to Mr. and Mrs. Holstein. I can't remember just what she was going to write on it but what it was was for your (the CHS & Museum's) benefit. She wanted to write to someone on the Society's behalf.

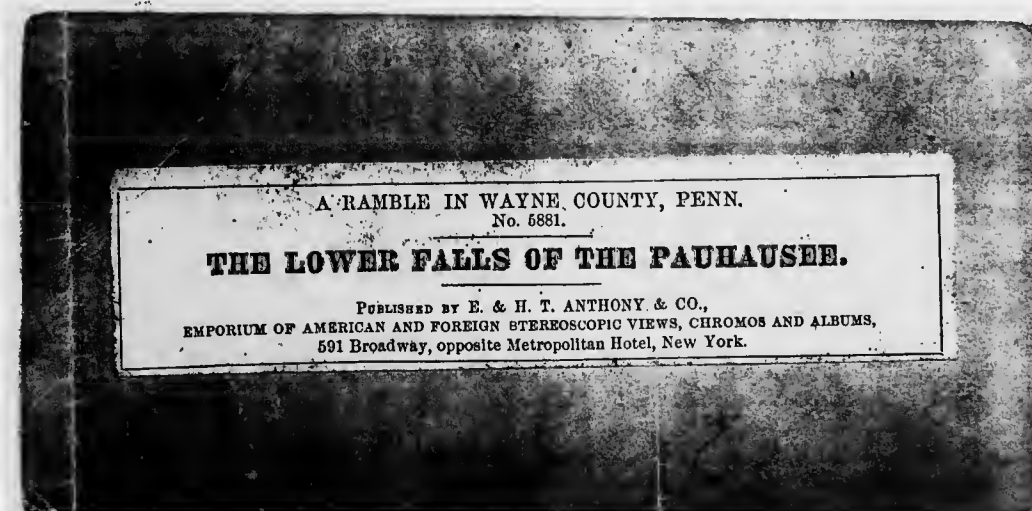
4. The Holsteins came across a "campaign button" of James Archbald at a dealer's store somewhere sometime. She wants to buy it for the Society and donate it. She will do this soon, and send it to you personally.

5. Mrs. Holstein has a photo postcard or stereograph (I can't remember which) - I'm pretty sure photo postcard - of the O & W Railroad depot at Kerhonsen (Middleport) NY that she would like to sell to Bob Tomaine. She read the Lecture and Film Series literature and therein she discovered Bob's interest and so she bought it and would like to pass it on to him. Tell her, if he is interested, and she will name the price and send the card to you or to him.

As a little cadeau she gave me the Anthony & Co. stereograph, "A Ramble in Wayne County, Penn."

They were both dears and we will go to an auction together shortly.

I hope to hear from you and get your correct mailing address shortly.
D.



This letter
from our
surfaces on
my desk &
I will
paste it down
bes. it
was on my
desk because
I had to
take action
on the
Holstein
enclosure.
Now that
I have, I
can prove
the letter.



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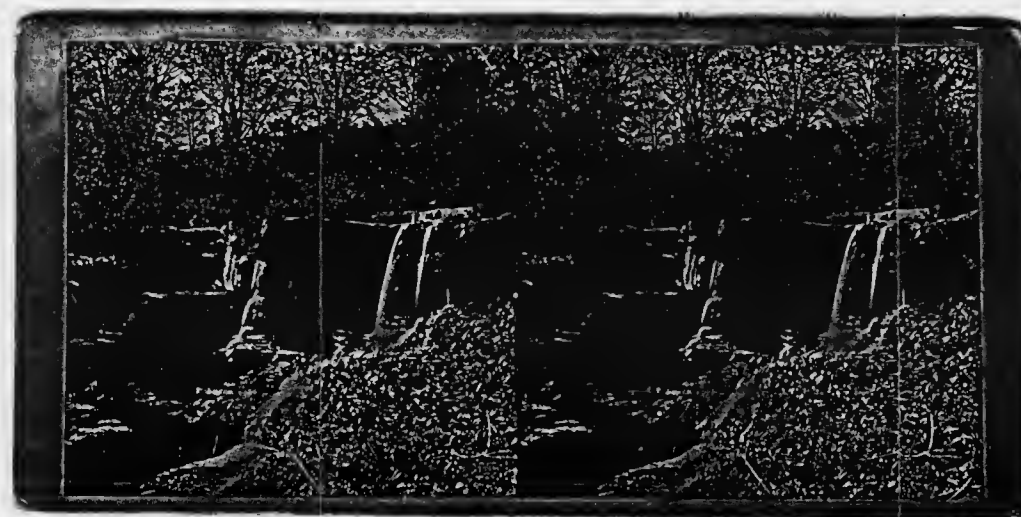
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American History, January 1988, p. 7

CURRENTS

In the latter years of the 19th century, Americans expressed a growing interest in preserving the past by organizing historical societies in their communities. The activities of these concerned citizens varied, as did their resources, and the results they achieved generally rested on the efforts of vol-unteers. Sometimes their dedication succeeded in acquiring, refurbishing, and opening historic homes as muse-ums. Other projects brought together documents, artifacts, and pictures that recorded their community's heritage and published books about a shared past that increased residents' awareness of the bonds that joined neighbors to towns, towns to states, and states to the nation.

At the same time, professional his- torians acknowledged their responsi- bility to encourage the important work being accomplished by local historians. In 1904 the American Historical Association established a Conference of State and Local His- torical Societies specifically intended to help community history leaders with the problems they encountered. During the 1930s, however, confer- ence members decided their goals could not be reached within the exist- ing structure. Among themselves they debated the prospects for a strong or- ganization of historical societies, questioning desirable goals and ways to realize them. They authorized committee chairman Christopher Crittenden, then director of the North Carolina Department of History and Archives, "to study the need for bet- ter coordination of state and local society activities." Careful evaluation of the findings, and an expressed will- ingness to reevaluate periodically, led to an independent organization which later became known as the American Association of State and Local History. Crittenden was elected its president. On January 14, 1941, he issued a press release stating the as- sociation's purpose as "the promotion of effort and activity in the fields of state, provincial, and local history in the United States and Canada."

The founders included professional historians, archivists, museum cura- tors, a representative of the National Park Service, as well as people active in various patriotic organizations, such as the Daughters of the Ameri- can Revolution. All were familiar with the difficulties and rewards of preserving history. They envisioned the AASLH as a service agency, de- veloping programs to provide his-

torical society leaders with informa- tion that would help them in the field. They began by issuing a bi- monthly newsletter and by preparing a revised Handbook of Historical Societies.

Crittenden, meanwhile, initiated a series of bulletins addressing specific problems that historical society and museum personnel faced. The first, written by Edward P. Alexander of the New York Historical Association, was titled "What Should Our Histori- cal Society Do?" Over the years the newsletter was expanded into the magazine History News, and these technical leaflets were bound into the centerfold so that they could be re- moved and collected into looseleaf binders for easy reference. To date, 145 leaflets have been published about such topics as making exhibit labels, publishing a newsletter, reach- ing the public through television and with audio-visual presentations, planning museum tours, recruiting members, and securing funds to keep local history activities going. Most of these practical "how to" guides are still available from the AASLH. The association also offers on-site consul- tation through a museum consulting service as circumstances permit.

Making useful information avail- able remains a critical AASLH en- deavor. The association publishes several books each year covering in depth the mechanics of museum cata- logging, management, and interpre- tation; oral history; finding sources; researching, writing, and publishing local history; genealogy; and organiz- ing an historical society. Though written by people with professional training, they are written for people in a working situation. (Nearly His- tory: Exploring the Past Around You, a current AASLH release, will be reviewed in the March 1983 issue of AHH.)

Since some questions cannot be an- swered in books, and since the asso- ciation understands the importance of meeting other historical society workers, it also conducts seminars and workshops in different sections of the country. These provide the chance to learn about local history management firsthand and, perhaps more important, an opportunity to share problems and solutions from one's own experience. Independent study courses developed through Na- tional Endowment for the Human- ities funding offer another way to stretch one's knowledge without leav-

ing home, if tight budgets or sched- ules prohibit extensive travel. There are also audio-visual training kits de- signed for use within the community.

As the AASLH services have grown, so has its membership, from 4,500 in 1975 to more than 7,500 this year. Understandably the staff sets priorities determining where they must focus their attention: this goes to people actually working with local history. Judging from AHH corre- spondence, many readers are among the professional and volunteer his- torians in their communities. They, unlike their counterparts of a century ago, can take advantage of AASLH assistance in preserving the past for the future. — Patricia L. Faust

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